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who says that this variety in the sitting accommodation "contributes not a little to give to the conversation an easy, fresh, and piquant turn; for, it may be remarked, nothing is less picturesque than an assemblage of persons, men and women, all seated on chairs of the same height and the same form. It seems then that the conversation assumes something of the uniformity of the postures which result from the similitude of the seats. We do not know whether decency gains thereby, but certainly the mind loses its liberty."

The observation of Viollet Le Duc is worth bearing in mind, and it is to be said to the credit of the contemporary French furniture makers that they do currently make and sell a great variety of chairs and seats that are at once comfortable, elegant, and amusing. Instead of huge sofas that inevitably remain in the same place against the wall, they make little sofas big enough for two persons, which can be placed near the fire-place without blocking the room up; they make round-backed Louis XV. sofas just large enough for a lady and her dress, and arm-chairs with straight backs and sloped backs in all styles, from the square feudal chair to the most slender-limbed Louis XVI. chair.

The wood used by preference is the native unpolished walnut and pear wood, either natural or ebonized. The upholstery is as various as the form and style; velvet, silk, brocade, chintz, Cordova leather, are all equally in favor.

The principal novelties in porcelain and faience were referred to in a recent article on the exhibition of the Union Centrale des Arts Decoratifs. In the shops you see, beside the ordinary English ironstone ware so clumsy and heavy in form and so false in the color of its decoration, the fine porcelain of Limoges, Haviland *grès*, Barbotine ware, and imitations of old Rouen, Nevers and Marseilles faience.

I noticed in Haviland *grès* ware, a charming flower *vasque*, decorated in low relief with a few straggling water-lily leaves and flowers, two or three crayfish swimming, and a sprinkling of pebbles and sand. The leaves are green, the flowers yellow, the crayfish reddish brown, and the *vasque* itself is simply the color of light burnt clay. The decoration is most ingeniously disposed so that by the very simple means above indicated, the idea is given of crayfish swimming in a pebbly brook covered with water lilies.

I have seen also an exquisite dinner service of the new white Sèvres porcelain made to order and simply with gold lines and the *devise* of the owner. This *devise* is simply a flying stork copied from a Japanese drawing with the motto "Libre et fidèle," written on a *banderolle* or streamer winding between his legs. This stork, drawn by means of a number of regular dashes in the style so much employed by the Japanese draughtsmen in their ink drawings, is reproduced in gold on each plate and each dish; and on each piece of the service it figures in a different spot, now at the side, now on the border, now one way now another, but never in the middle of a plate. The consequence is that although the *motif* of the design is uniform, no piece in the service is exactly like another, and each piece is unique.

To talk about women's robes, and hats, and coiffures would lead us too far, although in the Parisian shop-windows such objects play an important rôle. But if our subject were art in window-dressing we should have to include even the grocers who obtain wonderful effects of color with a palette composed of dried fruits, coffee biscuits, and bottles of pickles and preserved vegetables. Neither should we dare to neglect the pork butchers whose windows are complete symphonies in rose and white, relieved with the brilliant scarlet of the tongues of the *écarrlate*, the dishes of *andouillettes* edged with green parsley, and culminating in some complicated piece of ornamental sculpture in lard and jelly.

If we still enlarged our field of observation so as to include art in the street generally we should need to devote a word of praise to the advertising posters, the pictorial announcements of the new book or the new piece. Many of these posters are of a highly artistic character, a fact which does not surprise us when we look at them closely and find in one corner the signature of Joseph Chéret, one of the finest of modern scene-painters.

WALLS constructed of clay pipes are desirable for parapets exposed to a high wind. The air passes through the pipes without injury to the walls.

AN automatic "Mascotte" is a recent mantel ornament. The appropriate turkey accompanies her and moves at her command.

A TERRE HAUTE HOUSE.

THE following short description of the new house of Dr. Allen Pence, at Terre Haute, we clip from an exchange. The architect, Mr. W. H. Floyd, has made a very charming place of it, much more inviting than this meagre description would indicate:

The door opens into a large reception hall. From this hall the grand stairway starts—a stairway of solid cherry. At the first curve a window filled with Venetian glass sheds mellow light. But the reception hall—there are few like it in the city. It is warmed with an open fire-place, with hand painted tile, the painting the work of Miss Amelia Kussner. The reception hall opens into a large front parlor, a beautiful room finished with Gum. As a finishing wood, Gum is one of the finest grown in America. An open grate imparts a cheery appearance, and large windows bordered with cathedral glass give the room light. The massive wooden mantel is a beauty. It is of Gum, elegantly carved, and fitted with a plate mirror. Imbedded in the mantel on the left is a beautiful painting of "Morning," the work of Miss Amelia Kussner. "Morning" is represented by a maiden standing on the clouds scattering flowers on the world below. "Evening," by the same artist, is on the right, represented by a maiden in repose.

Then comes the back parlor, lighted by three windows bordered with cathedral glass. This room is also well finished with Gum. It is warmed with a fire-place, with tile border, with painting on the right and left, the work of Miss Kussner. The dining-room, a place which any house-wife would fall in love with at a glance, comes next. This room is finished with chestnut, a beautiful wood. There is a grate and a heavy chestnut mantel, with heavy plate mirror, while on the left in the wall is a china closet. Large side boards can be drawn out, making carving a pleasure. All three rooms—front parlor, back parlor, and dining-room, and the reception hall, are connected with sliding doors, and the rooms and hall can be thrown into one grand *salon*. The library, connecting with the back parlor, must not be overlooked—with its beautiful finishing of Gum and heavy massive sliding door opening into the parlor.

With easy steps the grand stairway leads to the second floor. The flight leads into a grand hall, warmed with a grate. Several of the rooms connect, and every room has a grate with massive carved mantel. All the finishing is of Gum, and all the doors are of chestnut. A stairway leads to the hall from the rear. There is a large clothes closet on this floor made entirely of cedar and is moth proof.

FRANC'S CHRISTMAS CARDS.

MESSRS. PRANG & CO., this year adopted a scheme in connection with the production of their Christmas cards, which has the merit of originality very noticeably developed. One peculiarity lay in the invitation to twenty-two prominent artists to contribute designs for cards, for which design each artist was paid his own price, and in addition thereto his drawing was entered into a competition for \$2,000 offered in four prizes to the best four of the sketches. The decision as to the disposal of the prizes was made in the thoroughly practical manner of asking several dealers if such goods to cast ballots in the shape of promissory orders for cards bearing the design they might prefer. The four designs for which the greatest number of orders were received were those by C. D. Weldon, Will. H. Low, Thomas Moran, and Frederick Deilman, in the order named.

While this means of determining the qualities of artistic work may not always recommend itself, yet in the present instance the choice could not have been better determined.

It is probable that so long as the Christmas holiday is observed, there will be found artists who will conceive a seasonable suggestion to be pantaletted young ones whose mouths are formed into impossible circular shapes to represent the vigorous song of praise that is being poured forth. If this design should escape for one year, its absence would probably be compensated for by an increased quantity of angels of questionable proportions and construction.

Choirs and madrigal singers have been popular Christmas pictures since that sort of art developed itself, and children with great round mouths and standing about in the snow have played themselves out. There should be sufficient originality about our artists to discover something new in this field, and leave such pictures which express

nothing in fact, and the vaguest sort of an idea, to the illustrators of fairy tales and children's books. The old tradition of Santa Claus and his deer team is permissible and has that about it which conduces to a pleasant imagination, but the spectacle of half frozen children singing in a snow storm, or of angels floating in mid-air bearing a babe, are not agreeable subjects and create no agreeable sensations. These faults, however, are wisely avoided in Prang's cards.

With the four designs selected in this competition, that of Mr. Low is the only one at all hackneyed. It would have met our idea of the appropriateness of things if Mr. Moran's designs had been awarded the first prize, but the selections all in all were well made.

DECORATION WITH CERAMICS.

CERAMIC ware, now everywhere accepted as ranking among the most beautiful of interior adornments, and as an appropriate finish to a room artistically furnished, is to be regarded as an indication of refined taste. A subdued use of it is, however, necessary. No arrangement of vases should bear the appearance of a mere collection.

There have, indeed, been national as well as individual crazes in ceramics, periods abroad when the business of bringing a host of china articles together was little more than a caprice of fashion. At times royalty sets the mode, the aristocratic and rich middle classes following suit.

Macaulay writes of Queen Mary: "Mary had acquired at the Hague a taste for the porcelain of China, and amused herself by forming at Hampton a vast accumulation of hideous images, and of vases on which houses, trees, bridges, and mandarins were depicted. The fashion spread fast and wide. In a few years every great house in the kingdom possessed a museum of these grotesque baubles. Even statesmen and generals were not ashamed to be judges of teapots and dragons, and satirists long continued to repeat that a fine lady valued her mottled green pottery quite as much as she valued her monkey, and much more than she valued her husband."

Addison, in his *Spectator*, ridiculing a prevailing tendency to chinamanism: "In her china room were piles of plates and dishes and pyramids of cups and saucers reaching from the floor to the ceiling. In one quarter was a rampart of tureens and soup dishes, in another an embellishment of punch bowls, candle-cups and porringers."

George the Fourth caught the craze for china teapots, of which he piled up pyramids at the Royal Pavilion at Brighton.

This special form of mania for mere acquisition, thus disports himself: "Every room in my house is furnished with my wife's trophies—rich cabinets, piles of china, Japan screens, and costly jars." In another paper, after alluding to "loves of monsters," he amusingly writes: "There is no inclination in woman that more surprises me than this passion for china. When a woman is visited with it, it generally takes possession of her for life. China vessels are playthings for women of all ages."

The *Lounger* tells of a lady afflicted with it, would appear never wholly to have died out. A few years since, a Mrs. Howe of London left three hundred teapots to her daughter. It might still be written of others as of Horace Walpole:

"China's the passion of his soul;
A cup, a plate, a dish, a bowl
Can kindle wishes in his breast,
Inflame with joy or break his rest."

The judicious collection of specimens of choice ceramic ware, whether representing one particular class, or school, or of all classes, or chronologically arranged, would seem not more unreasonable than the bringing together a number of paintings on canvas or *objets d'art*. Mere collections of china were properly find their place, whether for superficial survey or purposes of reference in museums. To be seen to best advantage, ceramics must serve the purposes, in appropriate position, of accessory ornamentation.

ORIENTAL CRAPE is the name given a new American silk made for decorative purposes by Stanton Bros., of this city. The material is a beautiful fabric, rather more than a rival for the Japanese—soft, sheeny and delightful to the touch and to the eye. The fact is that American silk has attained a position where it will be very difficult for the imported to compete, either in cost or quality, and when it can be made exclusively for decorative uses it indicates a progress through the other phases of manufacture which must be gratifying to every lover of American industries. It would be a good thing for our decorators to adopt something of this sort for their uses in place of the foreign goods.